

OBSERVATIONS

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ON THE

Cow Pox,

IN WHICH

THE PREJUDICES COMMONLY ENTERTAINED
AGAINST IT, ARE ATTEMPTED TO BE REMOV-
ED, AND ITS EFFICACY IN PREVENTING THE
SMALL POX WHEN PROPERLY INTRODUCED
INTO THE CONSTITUTION ESTABLISHED.
ADDRESSED TO THE POOR IN GENERAL,

AND THOSE OF WANDSWORTH IN PARTICULAR.

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THE Author has been induced to offer the following observations, from the circumstance of the Small Pox having unfortunately made its appearance in his * neighbourhood last year, and giving to death several victims ;† and notwithstanding past experience, the Cow Pox (the only sure means of averting the horrors of a disease, but a little short of the Plague in its consequences) is objected to, and prejudice continues very strong, and very prevalent in this extensive Village, against the reception of that invaluable blessing, especially among the poorer class of the inhabitants, to whom these observations are more particularly addressed.

Happily for the cause of humanity, the merits of Cow Pox Inoculation are now so firmly established by the thousands who have partaken of its benign and preserving influence, that the Small Pox has at length become a singular and conspicuous disease in this country ; without a doubt too of its ever being otherwise. But when the importance of Cow Pox Inoculation to society at large is duly considered, it is much to be lamented that any persons (either in or out of the profession,) who call themselves friendly to Vaccination, should even tolerate, much less sanction and assist, in propagating the dreadful disease, against which they acknowledge the Cow Pox to be a safe and certain remedy. It is very desirable that the

* Wandsworth.

† Five have occurred within my knowledge ; three were from inoculation, the fourth derived from an inoculated source ; but I am not acquainted whether the fifth was a case of inoculation or not. The circumstances attending the fourth were truly distressing. The parents were partial to the Cow Pox, in consequence of its usefulness having been shewn in three or four of their children, who had received it some years ago, and they were about to procure its advantages for two others of their family, when they were both attacked with Small Pox in its very worst form. The case alluded to had already terminated in death when I was called to see the other, who appeared to be also within a few hours of dissolution, but it affords me much satisfaction in being able to announce that my fears, and those of the parents, were agreeably disappointed by the recovery of the child, through the instrumentality of the means employed.

odium of encouraging and keeping alive a destructive malady, by continuing the use of Small Pox inoculation, should be removed. Let us not be forward to cherish that amongst us which is generally, and deservedly proscribed. To recommend the antidote, and to be inflexibly determined not to yield to the solicitations of those who would engage us in the cause of prejudice, are the bounden duties of every friend to Vaccination; indeed, how can any claim be made to consistency of conduct, by a person telling his patient, "I am a decided advocate for the Cow Pox; I consider it a very great blessing, and if I had twenty children of my own they should all undergo its operation, but to oblige you I will inoculate for the Small Pox:" he might add, what in truth is really the case, "at the hazard of introducing into my own family, and the whole neighbourhood, that disease which I so much disapprove of!" It is enough that such as have never been convinced of the usefulness of Vaccination, continue to deal out the "bane of infant life;" nay, some apology may be made for such; they never professed to view the Cow Pox in a favorable light, therefore they cannot support that which their judgment disapproves, and they preserve their consistency by their conduct. But the cause of Vaccination has been rather injured than promoted by many of its advocates; for the confidence which their professions of its efficacy were calculated to inspire, has been dissipated as soon as it was found that they were ready to impart the Small Pox to every applicant for its deadly poison.

I shall now proceed to notice the prejudices most commonly entertained against Inoculation for the Cow Pox, and endeavour to prove that they are unfounded; concluding with some general remarks calculated to recommend it to your cordial reception, as one of the greatest blessings you can bestow upon your children; and if I shall have been at all instrumental in causing any to lay aside objections which they had before entertained, if one life should be preserved, or one disfigured object prevented, I shall never regret the bestowal of my time and expence in your service.

On the first introduction of Cow Pox in this country (and it is deserving of national exultation that it originated here,) by Dr. Jenner, a name which will be handed

down to posterity with lasting honor and respect, many foolish and ridiculous objections were raised against it, which it would be a waste of time to notice, as they are pretty generally forgotten, or but seldom heard of. Under two classes, most of those that are now indulged may be comprehended, viz. 1st. It has been objected that those who submit to the inoculation of the Cow Pox, are notwithstanding liable to receive the Small Pox if exposed to its contagion: and, 2dly. that certain eruptions and disorders are the consequence, which, had the Cow Pox not been introduced into the frame, would never have appeared. With respect to the first objection, that the Cow Pox is no security against the Small Pox, I am willing to admit is the case in some peculiar constitutions; but in order not to be misunderstood, it is necessary I should explain what I mean by a peculiar constitution. It is generally known that Small Pox and Measles are diseases which occur but once during life; now when a person shall have either of these complaints twice, such an one may be said to have a peculiar constitution. Again, there is hardly a person that has attained the age of 50, if he has been frequently exposed to these disorders, but what is the subject of them: now where a person under the above circumstances passes through such a term of years without being affected with complaints so contagious in their nature and general in their attack, he also may be said to have a peculiar constitution. With respect to the latter peculiarity, several cases are on record, and I may add my testimony to them by stating, that two years ago I had an old female servant, who used to give this singular account of herself; that she never had the Small Pox or Measles, though she had often been where they existed in their worst forms, and had never experienced a days illness sufficient to confine her within doors in her memory, and she was then upwards of 60 years of age: hers was the constitution I have been describing.

But the former peculiarity, that of a person having the Small Pox twice, is that to which I wish to call your attention; it is an absolute fact, several instances being on record to establish it, that persons have received the Small Pox by inoculation, and on being again exposed to its infection, have been a second time the subject of it. It has also been known to occur naturally twice, inoculation

not having been performed at all; and that this arises from something in the nature of the constitution of such person, different from the generality, is fully proved by inoculating with the Cow Pox such as have had the Small Pox, either naturally or by inoculation, for that disease; and it will be found that not above one in a thousand will take effect: and in an equal proportion, the Small Pox may be introduced a second time into the constitution by inoculation. Now a person that is inoculated for the Cow Pox, and in whom the process goes on in a proper manner during its several stages, is precisely in the same situation as respects taking the Small Pox, as one who has already had the latter complaint; and as I have just said that one in a thousand may receive the Small Pox twice: so in the same degree I am willing to admit, the Small Pox may occur after the Cow Pox: but as it has never been represented of the Cow Pox that it is a greater security against taking the Small Pox than the inoculation for the latter disease, every thing that can be required of it is fulfilled, if the constitution into which it has entered is quite as secure as though it had been inoculated with what has been termed the Natural, but what I think better deserves the title of Unnatural Pox. And we have the experience of the most eminent and numerous part of the profession to prove that this is the case.

The Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons, composed of gentlemen of the highest attainments in that science over which they preside, have publicly pledged themselves not to inoculate for the Small Pox, and strongly recommended the same for general adoption among the Members of that College, thereby evidencing how important they consider the introduction of the Cow Pox is to the general welfare, and giving an example which, if properly followed, must soon lead to the utter extermination of a loathsome and dangerous disease.*

I am aware it will be objected, and by some in my own neighbourhood, that instances have occurred of Small

* In a great part of the Russian empire this desirable event has been accomplished, by the inoculation for the Cow Pox having been passed into a law. Before its introduction thousands used annually to be carried off by the Small Pox, but for the last year or two, not a single case of death has I believe occurred.

Pox after the Cow Pox, in a much greater proportion than one in a thousand; but this is a mistake; cases of this description have been repeatedly submitted to the examination of committees of medical men appointed for the purpose, and their reports have always borne testimony, that where the Small Pox had actually taken place after the Cow Pox, the latter had been proved not to have come forward in that regular, and perfect way which can alone render it an efficient substitute for that disease it is intended to prevent. In many instances the Chicken Pox (to which, as after the Small Pox, the person is liable,) was mistaken for it, and only in a sufficiently few instances to reconcile it to have arisen from a peculiar constitution, could they find it had occurred.

But as I have before noticed the necessity of the Cow Pox being regular and perfect in all its stages, in order to ensure its success, it is proper I should also acquaint you that the effects which are required to succeed the insertion of the matter into the inoculated part, sometimes fail altogether, and at other times come forward in a very imperfect manner; in both which cases the person is liable to the Small Pox, because the Cow Pox has never exercised its influence on the constitution. Now, where the first of these failures happens by the part healing up without any other appearance being manifested than that of a simple puncture or scratch, it is not difficult for any person to believe that such an effect can afford no security against the Small Pox; but it is the second kind of failure which is calculated to mislead persons not acquainted with the proper progress of the complaint, and thus many have been deceived into security; and who, on the appearance of the Small Pox after this imperfect effect, have improperly considered and set it down accordingly as an instance of Small Pox occurring after the Cow Pox. But the truth is, that an imperfect and partial effect from inoculation, affords no more security to the individual concerned, than the total failure of which I have spoken.

With a view to the better explanation of this important part of the subject, I will just illustrate this kind of failure, by representing it to you as I have known it to occur in my own practice.

Two children shall be inoculated at the same time, and with the same matter, and both at the fourth day shall

seem to have taken effect, the appearances in both being such as are required in that stage of the process; but on the eighth day, one shall be found exactly as it should be, while the other shall be either gone or dying away. Now, though on the inspection of the arms on the fourth day, both appear to be going on well, yet on the examination on the eighth day, one only could be pronounced to have received the preventive influence of the Cow Pox, while the other to all intents and purposes had failed, and could afford no real security by its regularity in the first stage of the inoculation.

The causes of failure may arise either from the matter used for the inoculation, having been taken from an imperfect formed Vesicle, or Pock as it is more commonly called; or it may have been taken at an improper period of time; or some severe complaint may arise, as the Measles, Hooping Cough, or an inflammation of some important part, when the inoculation has proceeded half way towards its completion, or at any time of its action, and put a stop to its further progress.

From this it will be seen how important it is to let the progress of the inoculation be submitted to the repeated inspection of the person that performed it, who is the most competent to judge of its regularity; and had this caution been more generally attended to, we should not, I am persuaded, have heard of one-third of the cases of Small Pox after the Cow Pox, which are now so readily brought forward whenever the subject is introduced.

An attention also is requisite on the part of the Inoculator, in selecting matter for the operation, and by being careful not to dispense with any of the appearances which properly belong to the Cow Pox, and constitute its real character. For want of this attention, some in whom the effects were imperfect, and consequently insufficient for the protection of the constitution, have been pronounced as fit to be depended on, have received the Small Pox, and have consequently appeared on the objection list; but from whatever cause failure may arise, whenever there exists any doubt of its having taken due effect, inoculation should be repeated again and again, as it will be sure to decide the question. For if the constitution has been properly affected, it will resist the attempts made to produce it a second time, and if it has failed, a proper effect

may take place by the last inoculation, though it had disappointed before, and thereby the security from the danger of contracting the Small Pox will be insured.

I now proceed to notice shortly, the second objection proposed to be considered, viz. that the Cow Pox is the occasion of peculiar humors and disorders. If it is supposed that any complaints to which the animal is subject from whom the disease derives its origin and name, are liable to succeed, an examination into the cases of such as have received the complaint immediately from the Cow, will soon shew what foundation there is for such an objection. These are the persons who from the very manner of their receiving the Cow Pox, it is rational to suppose will be the most liable to bestial complaints, but we do not find that such persons are affected with any ailments but what are common to those who have never been the subjects of Vaccination. And if we look in vain at the Fountain Head, they need not be feared to make their appearance from channels so remote from the animal spring, as are the sources of communication that are at present adopted for its propagation. For after passing from constitution to constitution, successive for several hundreds and thousands, the complaint must by this time I think have become humanized. But it is also objected that the disorders peculiar to the person from whom the matter is taken may be communicated by the inoculation, but this notion if true (which I am inclined to disbelieve), is equally applicable to inoculation for the Small Pox. The doctrine of Cow Pox humours and disorders, must therefore fall to the ground.

Yet humours and eruptions may and do appear after the Cow Pox, for this very good reason, because they would have happened had the person never been inoculated. The fact is, that while on the one hand, the Cow Pox produces no new humours, it does not prevent the liability to old ones, which were known to exist before its discovery. Children from the time of their birth to the conclusion of their first teething, are particularly subject to pimples and spots of the skin; from which at a more advanced period of childhood they are exempt. And any unprejudiced person will find on examination, that a child who has had the Cow Pox, is not the subject of the eruptions peculiar to the infantile state, in a greater

degree than those who have been left to pass the first two years of life without the introduction of it into their constitutions.

But I cannot dismiss the subject without some observation on the nature of the Small Pox, where it occurs after the Cow Pox, either from the peculiar constitution of the person, or the partial and imperfect effect of the inoculation, which has been pointed out to you to be the causes of its productions. It is found so altered in its effects, both as respects the duration of the eruption, and the effect upon the general health; that were it certain every person that had received the Cow Pox should be the subject of it, (instead of one in a thousand, and these in whom the inoculation had failed,) it would still secure for the Cow Pox the title of an invaluable blessing, for having converted a dangerous disease, into a harmless one, and for the thousands of lives it would thereby be the means of saving. So changed is it that the constitution is hardly more disturbed than by that mild disease the Chicken Pox; and did not the eruptions themselves point out the difference, containing in the one, matter, and in the other a watery fluid, we should not be able to recognize the disorder as Small Pox. And when it is recollected that it arises from peculiar circumstances, the propriety of a name that shall at once express the disease, and the cause of its production will be readily acknowledged: and I think the title Mild Constitutional Small Pox, well calculated to convey some idea of the nature of that eruptive complaint, which is under circumstances that I have explained, now and then met with after the Cow Pox.

Upon the whole it is evident that the Cow Pox is one of the greatest blessings mankind has ever been indulged with, and nothing is more calculated to recommend it, than by comparing it with that disease against which it is so safe and certain an antidote.

What is the Small Pox? A complaint, at the naming of which almost every one can recall to mind, some whom they have tenderly loved, snatched from them by that great harbinger of death! What is the Small Pox? Let the bills of mortality give the answer in the hundreds and thousands of their recorded victims! but is it in death alone that the answer is to be found! look at the frightful and disfigured objects that are left to testify its horri-

ble nature! On the other hand, if we examine that disease which it has been my object to recommend, we find it unattended with even temporary disorder of the constitution to any serious extent, and death from the Cow Pox has never been heard of. But death and disfigured objects do not sufficiently define the ravages the Small Pox has occasioned, where it fails to destroy or deform, it may so far weaken the powers of the constitution as to change the hearty, strong child, into a poor, puny object, who shall never while it lives (even should it be to advanced life) lose the stamp of weakness and disease, bequeathed by its foster parent! On the contrary, the effects of the Cow Pox are so mild, from the beginning, and during its whole course, that the constitution which was vigorous when it received it, loses nothing by the visitor it has admitted. It has rendered its possessor impregnable to the attack of a mortal and dangerous foe. Then surely it is entitled to our notice and grateful reception as a peculiar blessing of Providence towards the suffering human race. Indeed, on comparing the two diseases with each other, such a striking contrast is to be found, that by far the most rational objection that has ever been advanced is derived therefrom. It has been considered impossible that so mild a disease as the Cow Pox, should be a sufficient antidote to so dreadful a complaint as the Small Pox. But it was only in the early period of its introduction that this observation could be said with reason to apply. Experience of its utility evidenced in the preservation of thousands of lives to society, have established it to be a fact too strong, for time or prejudice ever to overcome.

In order to diffuse this inestimable blessing several benevolent institutions have been opened, for the purpose of presenting it to the poor by gratuitous inoculation; these exertions have been seconded by medical men in different parts of the country, allotting a few hours in the week for the same purpose; and should any from what has been offered in the foregoing pages, be desirous of partaking its advantages, I can inform them I have set aside a portion of my time for the performance of * Vaccine Inoculation free of expence, and it will afford me pleasure to see them avail themselves of the opportunity of gratifying their wishes. Should it however happen

* The days for inoculation gratis, are Mondays and Thursdays, from nine till eleven in the morning.

that my arguments prove unavailing, and that the Small Pox should continue to be eagerly sought after, and promoted in the neighbourhood, notwithstanding the melancholy instances of death from inoculation, which have occurred so very recently in our village;* this satisfaction of mind will be afforded me, that my motives were disinterested, my wish that of being useful, and I shall ever reflect with pleasure that my pen though feeble, had been employed in a good cause, **THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY.**

* I trust the means adopted by the legislature, which subjects the person exposing a child that has the Small Pox, to six months imprisonment, will cause the disease to be confined to those who display so much anxiety to procure it. In all probability the melancholy case recorded at the commencement of the observations would not have occurred, had more attention been paid not to expose children after being inoculated, to the public; and thus gratuitously conferring it to those around them who might possibly consider "their Small Pox blessing," to be a "great curse."